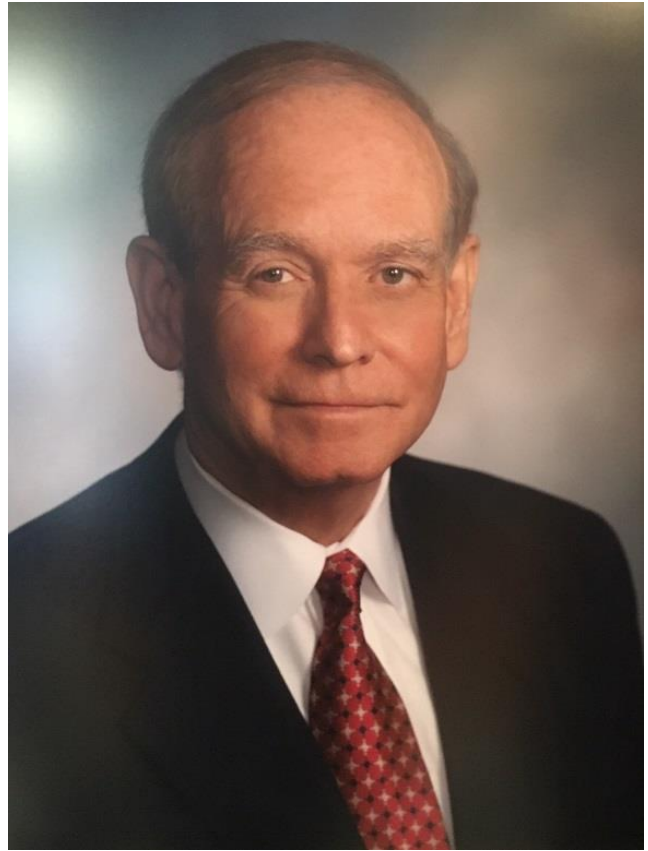


# Governor Robert D. Ray

Robert D. Ray was born in Des Moines on September 26, 1928, and passed away in Des Moines on July 8, 2018. In the intervening years, Bob Ray's leadership touched the lives of Iowans on dozens of fronts and reached global impact on several occasions.

Ray grew up in the Drake neighborhood and met the love of his life and future wife, Billie Lee Hornberger, at what is now First Christian Church while they were students at Roosevelt High School. The Roosevelt High School sweethearts started dating in 1945 and were married on December 22, 1951. His life revolved around love of family, first as a son and brother, followed by his passion to be a devoted husband, dedicated father to the Ray's three daughters and adoring grandfather to their eight grandchildren.



After World War II, Ray served the U. S. Army in Japan. He graduated from Drake University with a business degree in 1952 and law degree in 1954. He was a law and reading clerk in the Iowa State Senate, where he began to understand government and relish politics. Later, he built a successful practice as a trial lawyer.

In 1963, Ray was elected Iowa Republican State Chairman. After heavy losses in 1964, the Ray led GOP elected three new Congressmen and 88 state legislators in 1966.

After winning a hard-fought primary, and surviving an airplane crash, Ray was elected Iowa's 38th Governor in 1968. He was re-elected in 1970, 1972, 1974 and 1978. Because Iowans appreciated his steady, open, bipartisan leadership, Ray became the state's first four-term, then five-term Governor.

Governor Ray established the Iowa Commission of Latino Affairs and the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women and issued Executive Orders advancing civil rights.

In the late 1970's Governor Ray became a worldwide leader in the humanitarian resettlement of refugees from Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam by helping them relocate, find jobs, and start new lives in Iowa.

In 1979, Ray was a member of the U.S. delegation to the Special United Nations Conference of Refugees in Geneva, Switzerland. He later served as a U.S. Representative to the United Nations in 1983.

After leaving office, the Rays moved to Cedar Rapids where he became President and Chief Executive Officer of Life Investors, Inc., later known as AEGON. The Rays moved back to Des Moines when he became President and CEO of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Iowa. Ray owned radio station KILR in Estherville and was co-owner of WMT in Cedar Rapids.

Governor Ray was a member of the Iowa Business Council and served on the boards of directors of The Maytag Corporation, AEGON USA, Norwest Bank (aka Wells Fargo) and Alliant Energy. As a private citizen, Ray became involved in national health care debates while serving on many commissions.

In the late 90s, Ray filled out a term as Mayor of Des Moines. Ray also chaired the Drake University Board of Trustees and, when a vacancy occurred, he was named President of Drake.

Ray was a trustee for the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum and member of The Greater Des Moines Committee. He was a founding board member of the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation and founding co-chairman of Keep Iowa Beautiful. Ray was a strong supporter of Easter Seals of Iowa and Camp Sunnyside including decades as a faithful participant in the annual Pony Express Ride.

In 2005, Ray became the only governor or former governor to receive Iowa's highest honor, the Iowa Award, presented by Governor Vilsack and the Iowa Centennial Memorial Commission.

Ray was the first recipient of the Des Moines Register's Iowa Star Award after having been named by the paper in 2000 as 'The Most Influential Iowan of the 20th Century.' He was inducted into the Iowa Insurance Hall of Fame, the Business Hall of Achievement, and Iowa Business Hall of Fame.

*"The happiest people I know are people who are doing things for other people" -*  
Governor Robert D. Ray